



ABRA Update #18– March 1, 2015

FERC Announces Scoping Meetings on Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Public comment on the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) has been solicited by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in a Notice of Intent the agency issued on Friday, February 27 announcing that it will conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A copy of the notice was emailed to ABRA Update recipients on Friday, but it can also be accessed at: http://elibrary.FERC.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20150227-3043.

The FERC action is the most significant step to date in the regulatory process that will determine whether or not the ACP is built. The scoping process involves receiving public input to help the agency focus its analysis in the EIS on the important environmental issues. FERC will accept public comments until April 28, 2015. Instructions on how to transmit comments are found on pages 8 and 9 of the Notice.

The agency will also sponsor 10 scoping meetings in March to accept public testimony. This is approximately twice as many such meetings as are usually held for similar projects. Of particular interest to ABRA members are the following scoping meetings, all beginning at 7 pm: Wednesday, March 18 in Lovingston, VA; Thursday March 19 in Stuarts Draft, VA; and Monday, March 23 in Elkins, WV. A complete list of all 10 scoping meetings, and their locations is on page 2 of the Notice.

The Notice of Intent has as appendices maps of a number of alternative routes being considered by ACP. The Notice also contains a preliminary list of issues FERC staff has identified to date “that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the planned facilities and the environmental information provided by Dominion and Atlantic.” That list, found on page 7 and 8 of the Notice, includes:

- Land use impacts, including the exercise of eminent domain;
- Impacts on property values and tourism;
- Safety issues, such as construction and operation in karst and steep slope terrain;
- Alternative routes within existing linear corridors, avoiding private property, National Forests and sensitive environmental features;
- Impacts on surface water and groundwater resources;
- Impacts on forested areas, protected species and habitat;
- Impacts on cultural resources; and
- Concerns regarding construction and operational noise, especially related to compressor stations.

The Notice also indicates it invites comments on the topics of air quality, noise, geology and soils, and socioeconomics.

ABRA members may find useful a publication published by the Council on Environmental Policy in the Office of the President: *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA*. It is available at: http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/nm/programs/planning/planning_docs.Par.53208.File.dat/A_Citizens_Guide_to_NEPA.pdf.

Strong Attendance for March 7 Meeting, But Space is Available for More

Over 50 people representing 25 ABRA members and associated organizations have so far signed up for the March 7 ABRA meeting (10 am – 3pm) at the Staunton, VA Public Library. A few more spaces are available, so it's not too late to register. An agenda and registration form accompany this Update. A separate communication related to the meeting will be sent to all registrants this coming Wednesday that will discuss the format and objectives of the meeting. With the announcement this past week of the FERC-sponsored scoping meetings and comment period, the deliberations that occur at the March 7 will be very significant and timely.

Is the Environment a Moral Cause?

An op-ed appearing in the March 1 *New York Times Sunday Review* discusses the gap between the views of policy makers and the general public on environment issues. Author Robb Willer, a professor at Stanford University, observes:

“To win over more of the public, environmentalists must look beyond the arguments that they themselves have found convincing. The next wave of moral arguments for environmental reform will need to look very different from the last, if they are to be maximally effective.” The piece can be found at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/opinion/sunday/is-the-environment-a-moral-cause.html?ref=opinion>.

In the News . . . (* - noteworthy articles)

Montgomery County supervisors quiz Mountain Valley Pipeline representatives

– Roanoke Times, 2/23/15

http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/montgomery-county-supervisors-quiz-mountain-valley-pipeline-representatives/article_3885219f-1588-5b5e-b19a-0554ca0604f9.html

Dominion identifies alternative routes for planned Atlantic Coast Pipeline

– Nelson County Times, 2/23/15

http://www.newsadvance.com/nelson_county_times/dominion-identifies-for-alternative-routes-for-planned-atlantic-coast-pipeline/article_2872268e-bbb4-11e4-bf8c-efd18d61e423.html

Judge allows state to intervene in pipeline lawsuit – WDTV, Bridgeport, WV, 2/23/15

<http://www.wdtv.com/wdtv.cfm?func=view§ion=5-News&item=Judge-Allows-State-to-Intervene-in-Pipeline-Lawsuit-21382>

10 Arrested During Pipeline Protest In Front Of Dominion Headquarters

– WRIC-TV, Richmond, 2/23/15

<http://wric.com/2015/02/23/protestors-block-access-to-dominion-headquarters/>

New England natural gas demand up over winter 2013/2014 – FierceEnergy, 2/23/15

<http://www.fierceenergy.com/story/new-england-natural-gas-demand-over-winter-20132014/2015-02-23>

Dominion Virginia Power establishes all-time record for electricity usage

– Bristol Herald Courier, 2/24/15

http://www.tricity.com/news/article_aac538ae-bc3d-11e4-95fb-eb68eeec7963.html

***Karst topography involves dangers for pipelines**

– Advocate Messenger (Danville KY), 2/24/15

http://www.centalkynews.com/amnews/news/local/boyle/expert-karst-topography-involves-dangers-for-natural-gas-pipelines/article_9d11boch-db26-5eca-bca1-10a5a8c14f39.html

N.H. House GOP leader pens opposition to gas pipeline – NH Public Radio, 2/24/15

<http://nhpr.org/post/nh-house-gop-leader-pens-opposition-gas-pipeline>

Valley neighbors respond to pipeline route change – WHSV-TV, Harrisonburg, 2/24/15
<http://www.wHSV.com/home/headlines/Different-Pipeline-Routes-293909101.html>

***Environmental study shows potential risk from pipeline construction**
– News Virginian 2/24/15
http://www.dailyprogress.com/news/local/environmental-study-shows-potential-risk-from-pipeline-construction/article_0d43feaa-bc7c-11e4-a72d-5770089a95bo.html

McAuliffe signs Dominion deregulation bill – Virginian-Pilot, 2/25/15
<http://hamptonroads.com/2015/02/mcauliffe-signs-dominion-deregulation-bill>

Seven pipeline routes identified through Pocahontas County
– Pocahontas Times, 2/25/15
<http://pocahontastimes.com/seven-pipeline-routes-identified-through-pocahontas-county/>

Nelson County group takes offensive against pipeline surveys – Augusta Free Press, 2/26/15
<http://augustafreepress.com/nelson-county-group-takes-offensive-against-pipeline-surveys/>

Our energy pipeline – Greensboro News & Record, 2/26/15
http://www.news-record.com/opinion/n_and_r_editorials/our-energy-pipeline/article_f2cd262c-bd30-11e4-b7e7-b7d030b58a8b.html

Pipeline developer warns West Virginia landowners of possible legal action
– Roanoke Times, 2/27/15
http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/pipeline-developer-warns-west-virginia-landowners-of-possible-legal-action/article_3b186465-f44b-53bd-98e2-089afae695e1.html

Pipeline opponents challenge survey start times – News Virginian, 2/27/15
http://www.dailyprogress.com/news/local/pipeline-opponents-challenge-survey-start-times/article_381e25bc-bee6-11e4-9b36-c3b34317aa6c.html

Dominion admits date error in pipeline survey letter – WVIR-TV, Charlottesville, 2/28/15
<http://www.nbc29.com/story/28228272/dominion-admits-date-error-in-pipeline-survey-letter>

***In search of karst, and answers** – News-Leader, 2/28/15
<http://www.newsleader.com/longform/news/local/2015/02/28/search-karst-answers/24206547/>

Pipeline opposition growing In Craig Co., Virginia – PopularResistance.org, 3/1/15
<https://www.popularresistance.org/pipeline-opposition-growing-in-craig-co-virginia/>

Dominion pipeline: The heck-no brigade – Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/1/15
http://www.richmond.com/zzstyling/view-editorial/article_fe84dbd9-cc77-52d6-9cdb-2abae4569e53.html